

Class #9 - Presbyterianism: Theological Considerations

*My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
~Ezekiel 37:27~*

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."
~Revelation 21:3~*

Heritage Presbyterian Church is a Reformed church. That means we believe in the centrality and necessity of God's covenant with man through a mediator, ultimately Jesus Christ. Is such a belief in a "covenant" biblical? Where do we find this in Scripture?

I. Covenantal

A. What is a Covenant?

1. Words
 - a. *Berith* - more than 280 times in OT
 - b. *Diatheke* - 33 times
2. God established terms for fellowshiping with man
3. "A sovereignly determined and administered arrangement between God and man, with penalties and promises." [Chad Van Dixhoorn]

B. Where do we get Covenant Theology?

1. A Hermeneutic Approach
2. An Historical Approach

C. What is Covenant Theology?

*Covenant of Redemption?

*Adam - the covenant of commencement

- a. Instituted in Gen 3:15
- b. Sign? Tree of Life?
1. Noah - the covenant of preservation
 - a. Gen 6:18; Gen 9:9-17
 - b. Sign: Rainbow
2. Abraham - the covenant of promise
 - a. Gen 15:18; Gen 17:1-14
 - b. Sign: Circumcision
3. Israel and Moses - the covenant of law
 - a. Exodus 19:4-6; Ex 24:7, Ex 31:16, Lev 24:8
 - b. Signs: Passover, Sabbath, and other religious meals, festivals (circumcision continued)
4. David the covenant of kingdom
 - a. 2 Sam 7:8-16; Ps 89:3
 - b. Sign: Based on Abrahamic and Mosaic, royal throne introduced (Ps 89:30-35; 132:12)
5. Christ (New) - the covenant of consummation
 - a. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 37:24-28 (note all covenants mentioned)
 - b. Luke 1:68-75; Hebrews 8

D. Why So Important

1. How God relates to man (WCF 7.1)

2. What God Promises to His People
3. Not isolated doctrine: overarches everything

*The foundation of all saving mercy to lost sinners is the covenant of grace,
the covenant betwixt the Father and the second Adam.*

~Thomas Boston~

II. Confessional

A. Unity for the Faith of the Church

1. Learning from history
2. Example: Three Forms of Unity

B. Standard for officers in the church

1. Avoiding "I believe the Bible"
2. Other members not required to subscribe, but...(see appendix 1)

C. Discipleship for the Growth of the Church

1. Outline for Instruction
2. Case Study: Hypostatic Union
 - a. Took 450 years to agree – hence Nicean and Chalcedonian Creeds
 - b. Summarized in two WSC questions (21 & 22)

III. Connectional (very briefly since we will speak about it in class #10)

A. Encouragement

B. Accountability

C. Partnership

Appendix: Membership Vows of the OPC

- 1) Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?
- 2) Do you believe in one living and true God, in whom eternally there are three distinct persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—who are the same in being and equal in power and glory, and that Jesus Christ is God the Son, come in the flesh?
- 3) Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, that you repent of your sin, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?
- 4) Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord, and do you promise that, in reliance on the grace of God, you will serve him with all that is in you, forsake the world, resist the devil, put to death your sinful deeds and desires, and lead a godly life?
- 5) Do you promise to participate faithfully in this church's worship and service, to submit in the Lord to its government, and to heed its discipline, even in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life?